

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-05 GSA-02 STR-07
/075 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:WLSWING:GJB
APPROVED BY AF/C:LDJUNIOR
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-----106891 242338Z /13

P 242142Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 132598

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: EMIN, CG

SUBJECT: POST-KOLWEZI GECAMINES PROSPECTS

REF: LUBUMBASHI 0546

1. DEPT APPRECIATES AND COMMENDS LUBUMBASHI ON ITS WIRE
0546 WHICH IS INSIGHTFUL AND TIMELY AND OF CONSIDERABLE
UTILITY AS WE TRY TO RE-GROUP AND ASSESS WHERE WE GO
FROM HERE.

2. IN THIS REGARD, DEPT AT DESK LEVEL HAS SPOKEN INFORMALLY
WITH WORLD BANK REPS CONCERNING EXTENT AND IMPLICATIONS OF
GECAMINES DAMAGE ARISING OUT OF RECENT SHABA INCURSIONS.

3. BANK'S PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IS THAT DAMAGE TO
GECAMINES MAY NOT BE AS GREAT AS SOME REPORTS WOULD
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INDICATE. BUT OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT THERE APPEAR TO
HAVE BEEN NO ACTS OF SABOTAGE, THAT GECAMINES OFFICES
WERE NEITHER TOUCHED, OCCUPIED OR RANSACKED. RESULTING
DAMAGE WOULD SEEM TO BE LARGELY RESULT OF POWER SHORTAGE
WHICH CAUSED THE PUMPS TO STOP THEREBY ALLOWING WATER TO
FLOW INTO THE MINES. DAMAGES OCCURED PRIMARILY TO THE
FOLLOWING: CRUSHER PLANT; ELECTROLYTE BATH, AND

CONCENTRATORS.

4. GIVEN THIS OVERVIEW OF DAMAGES, IBRD REPS HERE
TEND TO BELIEVE THAT REPORTS SPEAKING OF A 6-MONTH
DELAY IN COPPER PRODUCTION ARE LIKELY TO BE TOO HIGH.
IBRD AGREES THAT THE IMMEDIATE DANGER IS THAT OF
EXPATRIATE EXPERTISE IN THE MIDST OF CURRENT DIFFICULTIES.
PROVIDED EXPATRIATE MANPOWER CAN BE FOUND, IBRD REPS
ESTIMATE THAT GECAMINES COULD RETURN TO PRODUCTION WITH
2-3 MONTHS.

5. ASSUMING SUCH A TIMETABLE DEVELOPS, IBRD ESTIMATES
THAT ANNUAL COPPER PRODUCTION THIS YEAR COULD REACH
300,000 TONS, COMPARED TO 1977 PRODUCTION FIGURES OF
450,000 TONS.

6. IBRD PLANS TO SEND A MISSION TO ZAIRE IN NEXT 4-6
WEEKS IN REGARD TO GECAMINES' OPERATIONS. WORLD BANK
REPT OBSERVED THAT TIMETABLE FOR VISIT HAD BEEN ACCELERATED
SOMEWHAT GIVEN THE EVENTS OF MAY. CHRISTOPHER

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